

# REGEN PROJECTS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## ***BY THE SEA***

**MARCH 16 – MAY 18, 2024**

**OPENING RECEPTION: SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 6:00 – 8:00 PM**

**GALLERY HOURS: TUESDAY – SATURDAY, 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM**



**Image:** Kader Attia, *Rochers Carrés*, 2007/2020. Lightbox  
79 1/4 x 99 x 7 1/8 inches (201.3 x 251.5 x 18.1 cm)

*Some of us who live in arid parts of the world think about water with a reverence others might find excessive.*  
—Joan Didion, “Holy Water” (1977)

Mindful of Los Angeles’s own defining relationship with water—from its site on the Pacific Rim to its intimacy with both droughts and floods—*By the Sea* centers water to think across the otherwise distinct practices of Regen Projects’ artists. Whether monumentally framed, as in Kevin Beasley’s *le mémorial*, 2022, iconic and studied in Catherine Opie’s *Sunrise #9*, 2009, stoic and mysterious in Silke Otto-Knapp’s *Tilting*, 2018, or concretely traced (by materializing its displacement) in Matthew Barney’s *Water Cast 11*, 2015, water emerges as a shared aesthetic and conceptual touchstone. From photography of coastlines and the open ocean to shimmering watercolors and striking abstractions, the installation moves with a liberty of spirit that mirrors water’s own shape-shifting potential.

At times both a literal and figurative battlefield, charged with political contests or social debates and inflected by fraught and immense histories, water carries the weight of our human dramas and tragedies. Kader Attia’s *Rochers Carrés*, 2007/2020, pictures two figures on a North African beach built of colossal concrete blocks. Attia frequented this beach as a young man during summers in Algeria and returns to it here as both a real boundary, at the edge of the Mediterranean between Africa and Europe, and an iconic, almost cinematic scene of both the uncertainty and possibility often imagined at the water’s edge.

Attia’s gazing figures recall the Romantic trope of the “rückfigur,” the contemplating observer implicit throughout the exhibition, from the act of artistic apprehension and composition to our own presence in the gallery. Anish Kapoor’s *Burple*, 2022, reflects and inverts the room with the revealing clarity of a mythic pool and then tosses our image asunder as we approach—not unlike the surface of a choppy lake or ocean charged by waves and riptides. At turns domineering and evanescent, Liz Lerner’s dark and inky *V (planchette)*, 2013 likewise embodies this protean animation. From one vantage, it towers over us; from another, it almost disappears. As described by curator Connie Butler, it curls and crests before us, like “a sexy wave,” and presages Lerner’s more recent sculptures made from the same single-use plastics polluting oceans and other waterways worldwide.<sup>1</sup>

A site of endless human projections and never-ending poetic interpretations, water becomes a kind of meta-metaphor for the dialogue of perception, a conduit for imagining the possibility of finding meaning in the otherwise inchoate and drawing connections between us in the same way oceans and rivers link diverse peoples and places. Access to and regulation of water as a resource, medium, or protective barrier has encouraged the rise and fall of civilizations and will be a defining factor for our collective future on Earth. Acknowledging this, water’s metaphoric unity, its ability to help us think in terms of a shared, fluid space always in flux feels more urgent than ever in an increasingly fractious and alienated century. *By the Sea* encourages us to look anew, through a fresh and powerful lens, to draw these and other works together both conceptually and aesthetically.

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<sup>1</sup> Connie Butler, “Something about That Smile,” in Liz Lerner, *Don’t put it back like it was* (SculptureCenter, Walker Art Center, Dancing Foxes Press: New York, 2022)